

# **INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM APPLICATION**



**September 2010**

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Governor**

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Acting Commissioner**

**New Jersey Department of Education  
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEW JERSEY</b>  <b>INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM</b>  <b>APPLICATION</b></p>
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**REFERENCES:**

**INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE REGULATIONS N.J.A.C. 6A:12**

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap12.pdf>

**INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE ACT 2010**

[http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/A0500/355\\_R2.PDF](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/A0500/355_R2.PDF)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEW JERSEY</b> <b>INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM</b></p>
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Interdistrict Public School Choice Program (school choice program) was created by the New Jersey legislature in January 2000 as a five-year pilot program designed to explore whether public school choice would provide a viable educational option for New Jersey students and their families by offering flexibility in selecting a public school program that best meets the needs of an individual student. Since the expiration of the pilot in 2005, the New Jersey Department of Education (department) has maintained the program at the same level as it had achieved at that time. In June 2010, the legislature established a permanent Interdistrict Public School Choice Program. Under the school choice program, interested New Jersey school districts apply to become choice districts, opening seats into which they will accept non-resident students at the expense of the state.

The pilot program limited the establishment of choice districts to one per county. In the first six choice district application periods, the department selected a total of sixteen choice districts from among those districts that had submitted competitive applications. (One district, Belvidere in Warren County, withdrew from the program at the end of the pilot). Ten choice districts were selected for the first year of the program with students enrolling for the first time for the 2000-2001 school year; one additional district was selected for the second year of the program with students enrolling for the first time for the 2001-2002 school year; two additional districts were selected for the third year of the program with students enrolling for the first time for the 2002-2003 school year; one additional district was selected for the fourth year of the program with students enrolling for the first time in the 2003-2004 school year; one additional district was selected for the fifth year of the program with students enrolling for the first time for the 2004-2005 school year and one additional district was selected for the sixth year of the program with students enrolling for the first time in the 2005-2006 school year.

The current choice districts are:

Atlantic County: Folsom	Hudson County: Hoboken
Bergen County: Englewood	Hunterdon County: Bloomsbury
Burlington County: Washington Twp.	Monmouth County: Upper Freehold
Camden County: Brooklawn	Morris County: Mine Hill
Cape May County: Lower Township	Ocean County: Stafford Township
Cumberland County: Cumberland Regional	Passaic County: Manchester Regional
Gloucester County: South Harrison	Salem County: Salem City
Union County: Kenilworth	

Information about the current choice districts may be found at  
<http://www.nj.gov/education/choice/districts/index.html>

Under the newly enacted Interdistrict Public School Choice Program Act the opportunity to become a choice district is now open to all LEAs in the state.

## **2. WHY APPLY TO BECOME A CHOICE DISTRICT?**

A school district is eligible to participate in the program as a choice district if it

- has classroom space available,
- submits a completed application in a timely manner, and
- receives department approval to participate.

Generally, the districts that apply to become choice districts include those experiencing

- declining enrollment,
- need to decrease class size,
- need to implement innovative programs,
- need to increase the financial resources available to the district, and/or
- need to diversify the student population.

### **2.1 CHOICE DISTRICT FUNDING**

The School Funding Reform Act, N.J.S.A.18A:7F-43.20 provides:

For the purpose of calculating all forms of State aid pursuant for a choice student in a choice district, the student shall be counted in the resident enrollment of the receiving district. The receiving district shall receive school choice aid for each choice student equal to the adequacy budget local levy per pupil amount.

For purposes of this section, “adequacy budget local levy per pupil amount” means the adequacy budget calculated pursuant to section 9 minus equalization aid calculated pursuant to section 11 divided by the resident enrollment.

The choice district will also receive all categorical aid associated with the individual students.

Examples of how some of the current choice districts have benefited from school choice aid funding include:

- increase in diversity of student population;
- reduction of a projected 25-cent tax increase to an actual increase of five cents;
- replacement of lost state aid;
- hiring of additional teachers;
- addition of class sections;
- reduction in class size;
- increase in instructional hours or days;
- expansion of specialized programs such as Reading Recovery;
- creation of new programs;

- addition of such subjects as art and music;
- purchase of new classroom computers; and
- installation of an interactive video distance learning classroom.

## **2.2 CLASS SIZE REDUCTION**

Participation in the school choice program provides an excellent opportunity for the choice district to reduce class size. Since each year the choice district determines the grade level(s) in which it will make seats available and also determines the number of seats it will make available in each of these grade levels, the choice district may elect to open the number of seats at a particular grade level which, added to the number of resident students at that grade level, will enable the choice district to create two smaller classes, instead of one large class of resident students. For example, a choice district with 25 resident first graders could choose to open 15 seats in first grade for a total of 40 first graders, and then divide the first grade into two classes with 20 students each.

Several of the current choice districts have been able to use school choice aid in this and other ways in order to reduce class size. For example, the Kenilworth School District which had made seats available in grades 7, 9 and 10 was able to reduce class size in grade 6 where it had made no seats available for choice students, by using school choice aid to hire an additional sixth grade teacher.

## **2.3 EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS**

School choice aid may also provide an opportunity for a choice district to initiate innovative programs, which the district would otherwise be unable to fund, and/or to expand existing programs. Such innovative programming provides educational advantages and expands opportunities for the choice district's resident students, as well as for the choice students who may participate in the programs offered by the choice district.

Several of the current choice districts have been able to implement outstanding school-to-career offerings for resident and choice students with the assistance of school choice aid, and several have added programs in music and the arts. Other choice districts, including Bloomsbury and Cumberland Regional High School, have been able to expand their technology-based opportunities for all students attending the district.

## **2.4 WIDER HORIZONS FOR CHOICE DISTRICT STUDENTS**

The school choice program provides each choice district with the opportunity to expand its potential student body to include students of different backgrounds and with different experiences from those of the district's resident students. Choice districts that offer specialized programs can attract students who have talents and interests particular to that program and who will bring their own valuable contributions to the school community. For example, Salem City High School's Performance Dance program provides an educational choice for talented dancers from beyond the pool of students residing in the district itself, and Englewood's Academies@Englewood have attracted students from districts throughout Bergen County and beyond.

Small choice districts in small towns have been able to enrich their school communities or simply to add new faces to the school family. In one small rural district, a sixth-grade student explained that they were looking forward to choice students joining their school because it would provide an opportunity for the resident students to make new friends.

Participation in the school choice program has also provided expanded opportunities for students to contribute to their school communities. Several choice districts have instituted "buddy" programs in which each choice student who will be attending the district in the next school year is paired with a resident student in the class the choice student will be joining. The resident student "buddy" is responsible for introducing the new student to the school for a visit during the current school year, and will be the new student's guide and resource when the new student joins the class. Pairs of buddies have remained in contact between the visit and the start of the new school year and have formed firm friendships by the time they are classmates. Learning to be responsible to and for each other is an important lesson for all children.

### **3. BECOMING A CHOICE DISTRICT**

#### **3.1 ELIGIBILITY**

A district board of education of a school district established pursuant to Chapter 8 or Chapter 13 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes is eligible to apply to become a choice district.

#### **3.2 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION**

An eligible LEA can apply to participate in the school choice program by submitting a completed application to the Department of Education, by **October 29, 2010**. Instructions for completing the application may be found in **SECTION 7: COMPLETING THE APPLICATION**.

An original and three copies of the completed application and all attachments must be sent to:

Interdistrict Public School Choice Program  
Division for School Effectiveness and Choice  
New Jersey State Department of Education  
P.O. Box 500  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0500

Applications delivered in person or by package delivery services must be received in the Department of Education no later than **4:00 p.m. on October 29, 2010**. Applications submitted by mail must be **postmarked by October 29, 2010**.

#### **3.3 SELECTION OF CHOICE DISTRICTS**

An Application Review Team will review all applications received by October 29, 2010 using the criteria established at in the *Interdistrict Public School Choice Act* §5; *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-3.2*. The criteria include the following:



- the quality and variety of academic programs offered for choice students' participation;
- the potential effectiveness of the student selection process and of the admissions criteria established in the application;
- the budgetary ramifications for the applicant district;
- the impact on student population diversity in the district; and
- the degree to which the program will promote or reduce educational quality in the choice district and the sending districts.

### **3.4 MAKING SEATS AVAILABLE FOR CHOICE STUDENTS**

A choice district may make seats available to choice students in grades K through 12.

*Before the first student application cycle for the upcoming school year*, the choice district identifies the grade levels in which it will make seats available to school choice program students, and the number of seats it will make available at each of those grade levels. Choice districts may elect to make seats available at every grade level; in only some grade levels; or only in specific programs.

### **3.5 CHOICE DISTRICT PROCEDURES**

A choice district:

- shall admit students on a space available basis. If there are more applicants than there are seats, the choice district must hold a lottery to select its choice students.
- shall develop a waiting list in the event of a lottery,
- may limit admissions to a particular grade level or to areas of concentration such as mathematics, science or the arts.
- may establish reasonable criteria to select prospective choice program students. Reasonable criteria are those established and applied by the district to determine the admission to the program of the resident students of the district and may include the student's interest in the program offered by the choice district. These criteria must be outlined in the district board of education's application for choice program participation.
- may not impose admission criteria upon prospective choice program students other than those used by the choice district to determine admission of its resident students to the program for which the prospective choice students are applying.
- shall not discriminate in admission policies on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person, proficiency in the English language or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law.

For all choice district procedures see *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.2 et seq.*

### **3.5(a) STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

A choice district may reject the application for enrollment of a student who has been classified as eligible for special education services pursuant to chapter 46 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes if:

- the student's individualized educational program could not be implemented in the district; or
- the enrollment of that student would require the district to fundamentally alter the nature of its educational program; or
- the enrollment of that student would create an undue financial or administrative burden on the district.

However, a choice district shall not prohibit the enrollment of a student based upon a determination that the additional cost of educating the student would exceed the amount of additional state aid received as a result of the student's enrollment.

An appeal of any denial of an eligible choice student applicant for enrollment in a choice district may be filed by the parent or legal guardian with the Commissioner in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6:24*.

### **3.5(b) STUDENTS WITH A RECORD OF SERIOUS DISCIPLINE ISSUES**

A choice district may reject the application of a student with a record of serious discipline issues including weapons violations, injury to self or others, or threat of injury to self or others.

An appeal of any denial of an eligible choice student applicant for enrollment in a choice district may be filed by the parent or legal guardian with the Commissioner in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6:24*.

### **3.5(c) PARENT-PAID TUITION STUDENTS**

Districts may not maintain a parent-paid tuition program pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:38-3* simultaneously with participating as choice districts in the school choice program. If a district that has previously accepted parent-paid tuition students is chosen as a choice district, that district must permit students who are enrolled as parent-paid tuition students at the time of approval by the Commissioner of the district as a choice district to become choice program students, and the district may not continue to accept parent-paid tuition students.

These students will be funded by the state as are all other choice program students.

### **3.5(d) TRANSPORTATION OF CHOICE PROGRAM STUDENTS**

Transportation, or aid in lieu of transportation shall be provided to an elementary school pupil who lives more than two miles from the choice district school of attendance and to a secondary school pupil who lives more than two and one-half miles from the choice district school of

attendance, provided the choice district school is not more than 20 miles from the residence of the student.

Transportation, or aid in lieu of transportation, shall be the responsibility of the district of residence. *Interdistrict Public School Choice Act* §9.

### **3.5(e) REGIONWIDE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM**

Each choice district is required to establish a regionwide public information program to provide information to the public about the interdistrict public school choice program in general and the choice program offered by the district in particular. The public information program must be targeted to all communities from which the choice district can anticipate attracting students. *Choice districts may not utilize the public information program to target a specific community or communities.*

At a minimum, the public information program must include the following:

- notification that the district has been chosen as a choice district;
- a description of the choice program offered by the district;
- information regarding student application procedures; and
- information regarding the district, its schools, its programs, and its student and course policies and procedures.

All information disseminated through the regionwide public information program should include the web address of the school choice program, [www.nj.gov/njded/choice/](http://www.nj.gov/njded/choice/).

### **3.5(f) PARENT INFORMATION CENTER**

Each choice district must establish and maintain a parent information center. The parent information center need not be a physical location. The parent information centers in current choice districts include a telephone hot line, a contact person in the school guidance office, and a table with information in the school office. The center must make available to all interested parents both written materials and access to a person with whom to discuss the program.

The center must collect and disseminate information about participating interdistrict public school choice programs and schools and must assist parents and guardians in submitting applications for enrollment of choice program students in appropriate programs and schools.

All information about the district's participating programs and schools must be posted on the district's website. In addition, parents should be informed of the information that is available on the department's website, [www.nj.gov/njded/choice/](http://www.nj.gov/njded/choice/).

## **4. CHOICE PROGRAM STUDENTS**

Any student accepted as a choice program student in a choice district becomes, for all intents and purposes, a resident student of the choice district and is subject to all rules and regulations and entitled to all privileges offered to resident students of the choice district.

*The notice of intent to enroll signed by the parent or legal guardian of a choice student is binding on the student who must remain enrolled in the choice district for at least one full school year with certain exceptions. However, a student will be permitted to transfer back to the district of residence or apply to a different choice district during the next application period.*

Any student enrolled as a choice program student in a choice district shall be entitled to remain as a choice program student in that district until graduation. Graduation is defined as completion of the highest grade offered in the choice district. For example, in a K-6 district, completion of grade 6 would constitute graduation.

In the event of termination of the choice program in the choice district, any student enrolled at that time in the district as a choice program student is entitled to remain enrolled in that district until graduation.

#### **4.1 STUDENT ELIGIBILITY**

Participation in the school choice program is limited to students entering grades K through 12. To be eligible to participate in the school choice program, students must be enrolled at the time of application in grades preschool through 11 in a public school of their district of residence, and must have attended public school in the district of residence for one full year immediately prior to enrollment in the choice district. To meet this requirement, the student must have been counted on the October ASSA of the district of residence in the current school year, must complete the current school year in the district of residence, and must meet all attendance requirements of the district of residence.

In the event that a student's family moves from one district of residence to another during the school year and the student enrolls in the public schools of each of those districts of residence, the student shall be considered eligible as having spent one full year in the public schools of his/her districts of residence.

The one year requirement shall not apply to a student applying to enroll in kindergarten in the choice district if that student has a sibling already attending the choice district.

The one year requirement shall not apply to a student applying to enroll in kindergarten in a choice district if the district of residence of that student does not offer a public pre-school program.

If there is an opening in a designated school of a choice district and there is no student who meets the attendance requirements outlined above, including a student who has been placed on a waiting list based on a lottery held in the choice district, then the choice district *may* fill that opening with a public school student who does not meet the attendance requirements outlined above, or a nonpublic school student.

Students residing out of state may not participate in the school choice program. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-2.2(b).*

#### **4.2 STUDENT APPLICATION PROCESS**

Beginning with the student application process for students seeking to be admitted to a choice district in the 2001-2002 school year, the department instituted a two-cycle student application process. Each choice district conducts a student application process in the fall of the calendar year preceding the school year for which the students are applying to attend the choice district. For example, students will apply in fall 2010 for admission to the choice district for the 2011-2012 school year.

In the event that the choice district has seats available for choice students after the completion of the fall student application process, the choice district may conduct a second application process in the spring of the calendar year in which the students are applying to attend the choice district. For example, students will apply in spring 2011 for admission to the choice district for the 2011-2012 school year.

***For this year only newly selected choice districts will conduct only the second (spring) application process.***

In addition to the two-step application process, the interdistrict public school choice program regulations provide for the establishment of a waiting list in any district of residence or choice district that conducts a lottery to determine which students may participate in the school choice program.

**NOTE:** The choice district's waiting list may be used to admit students to the choice program until the first day of school, if unexpected vacancies occur.

If there is an opening in a designated school of a choice district and there is no student who meets the attendance requirements outlined above, including a student who has been placed on a waiting list based on a lottery held in the choice district, then the choice district ***may*** fill that opening with a public school student who does not meet the attendance requirements outlined above, or a nonpublic school student. *Interdistrict Public School Choice Act §7a.*

The application timetable for the 2011-2012 school year is available at:  
<http://www.nj.gov/education/choice/apptimes.htm>

## **5. DISTRICTS OF RESIDENCE**

The school choice program includes controls designed to minimize the negative consequences of the program for districts of residence. Districts of residence will be able to establish enrollment limitations for their students who want to participate in the school choice program.

In addition, the participation of any district of residence's students in the school choice program is limited by the number of seats made available in the choice district and the fact that the district's students will be competing for those seats from students from other districts.

## **5.1 DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE RESOLUTIONS TO LIMIT STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

The district of residence shall not prevent or discourage its students from participating in the school choice program. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.1(a)*.

A district of residence may not restrict the participation of its students in the choice program where the district's students provide written notice of intent to apply to a specialized educational program that is offered by the choice district and not offered in the sending district *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.1(a)3*.

However, pursuant to the Interdistrict Public School Choice Act §8a and *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.1(a)1*, the board of education of the district of residence may limit the number of its district students allowed to participate in the choice program by adopting a resolution to do the following:

1. limit the enrollment of its students in a choice district to a maximum of 10 percent of the number of students per grade level per year in the district, and/or
2. to a maximum of 15 percent of the total number of students enrolled in the district.

The calculation of the enrollment restriction percentage shall be conducted at the beginning of each school year and shall be based on the enrollment count as reported on the Application for State School Aid in the October preceding the school year during which the restriction on enrollment shall be applicable.

- Students from the sending district who are already enrolled in and attending a school choice program shall not be included in the newly calculated number of students eligible to attend a school choice district.
- When the multiplication of the grade level enrollment by the percentage established in the sending district's resolution results in a number with a decimal, the number will be rounded to the next whole number.
- The sending district's resolution restricting its students' participation may not be applied to the final grade level available in the sending district.

In the event that a district adopts any resolution restricting the enrollment of its students in choice districts and student requests for participation exceed the limits set by the district of residence, the district must conduct a lottery. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.1(a)5*.

When a district board of education of a sending district has adopted a resolution to impose a limit on the number of its students participating in the choice program and when the student notices of intention to participate in the choice program exceed that limit, before conducting the lottery the sending district may give preference to siblings of its resident students already enrolled in and attending the choice district.

In the first application cycle, the results of the lottery must be used to determine which students will be eligible to participate in the school choice program and to develop a waiting list of the remaining students.

In the event that a district does not adopt a resolution restricting the enrollment of its students in choice districts, the district must allow all interested students to apply for admission to the choice district(s).

### **5.3 DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE PROCEDURES**

A district of residence shall not prevent or discourage students from participating in the school choice program. However, upon adoption of a resolution, the district board of education may limit the number of its students participating in the choice program.

Upon receipt of a Notification of Intent to Enroll in a Choice District from a student residing in its district, the district of residence must verify that the student is enrolled in a school of the district of residence and that the student has been counted as a student in the district of residence in the October ASSA of the current school year. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.3(c)1.*

In the event that a district adopts a resolution restricting the enrollment of its students in choice districts and student requests for participation exceed the enrollment percentage limitations set by the district of residence, the district must conduct a lottery. The lottery must be held in enough time to meet the deadline established by law for notification to the parent or legal guardian. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.1(a)5.*

In the first application cycle, the results of the lottery must be used to determine which students will be eligible to participate in the school choice program and to develop a waiting list of the remaining students to be used in the second application cycle. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.1(a)5.* Each participant in the lottery must be assigned a number reflecting the student's place on the list of eligible students or on the waiting list.

In the event that some or all of the students in the district of residence who received permission to apply to a choice district in the first application process do not enroll in a choice district, the district of residence must first go to its waiting list to ascertain which students will be eligible to apply to a choice district in the second application cycle. In the event that there are more spaces than may be filled by the students on the waiting list, the district of residence must allow additional students who express interest in applying to a choice district to do so. If there are more interested students than would be permitted by the district's enrollment limitation percentage the district must conduct a lottery of all *newly interested* students to determine which students may apply to a choice district. This lottery should not include students on the first application cycle waiting list who must be offered the opportunity to apply to a choice district *before* the newly interested students.

The district of residence must provide to the parent or legal guardian of all students who have submitted a notice of intent to enroll in a choice district by the due date, written notification that the student may or may not participate in the school choice program. *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.3(c).*

The notification that a student may not participate in the school choice program must include an explanation. *The only valid reason for refusing a student permission to apply to a choice district is that the district of residence has conducted a lottery and the student was not chosen.* If the student has been placed on the waiting list, the notification must include that information and provide the waiting list number assigned to the student.

Timelines for this process are available at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/choice/apptimes.htm>

In the event that the district of residence fails to provide timely notification to the student's parent or legal guardian stating whether or not the student may participate in the school choice program, then all such students must be allowed to participate in the school choice program and may submit their applications directly to the choice district.

## **6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Technical assistance will be available on an individual basis by telephone at (609) 633-1997.

## **7. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION**

For the entire application, please provide a table of contents, labeling and paginating each section. Attach all supporting documentation as appendices, which must be referenced in the body of the application.

The narrative section of the application must be typed in a size 12 font, double-spaced with one inch margins.

Forms for completing the application are available beginning on page 22.

### **7.1 COVER PAGE**

1. Provide all information requested on the cover page.
2. Include the name, title, phone number, fax number and e-mail address of the district staff member assigned as the contact person with the Department of Education for the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program. The contact person should be familiar with the choice program legislation and regulations, as well as with the choice program proposed by the district.

It would be helpful if the contact person were someone other than or in addition to the district superintendent. Since the many requirements of the superintendent's position can make her/him difficult to reach at times, it works better to have a different, or an additional, staff member available to parents and to department staff.

3. Enter the date on which the district board of education has approved the submission of the district's application. If the board of education will not meet until after the due date of the application, enter the date on which the board of education will be asked to



approve the application submission. Notification of board of education approval must be forwarded to the Interdistrict Public School Choice office before announcement of the selected choice districts that is scheduled to take place no later than January 15, 2011.

## **7.2 CLASSROOM SPACE IDENTIFICATION FORM**

Complete a separate form for each school in which seats will be available for choice program students in the 2011-2012 school year. Copy the form as needed.

**REMINDER:** *Each year before the first student application cycle for the upcoming school year*, the choice district identifies the grade levels in which it will make seats available to school choice program students, and the number of seats it will make available at each of those grade levels.

## **7.3 PROGRAM NARRATIVE**

If the applicant does not use the Department of Education forms in developing the answers to the three-part program narrative, the applicant must label each section and restate each question or statement prior to the response, following the sequence presented in the three-part program narrative section.

Please provide complete and concise answers to every question and statement presented.

### **PART I: DISTRICT IDENTIFICATION**

1. Provide a description of the district, its schools, and its programs, *e.g.* , whole school reform, reading readiness, technology infusion, alternative learning experiences, enrichment classes, or literature-based reading.

Include a copy of the district's student handbook, the course description guide, and transportation policy with your application.

2. Describe the demographics of the community and of the student population of the district.
3. Provide a description of the program to be offered to interdistrict public school choice students. This may be a specific program, such as a theatre arts program for high school students, or simply the opportunity to share in the small classes and individual attention on which the district prides itself.
4. Provide a description of the organizational structure of the district. This may take the form of an organizational chart or may be presented as narrative.
5. Identify the individual and/or office within the district responsible for administration and coordination of the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program.
6. Provide a listing of those districts likely to participate as sending districts in your district's school choice program.

7. Provide a description of any previous experience that the district has had with intradistrict, as well as interdistrict, choice programs.
8. Provide a three-year plan for the choice program, including a projection of the number of seats that will be available in the district for the second and third years of participation in the school choice program. Identify the schools and grade levels in which you anticipate having available seats in each year.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The three-year plan is just that, a plan. It is not a commitment. *Before each student application cycle*, the choice district itself identifies the grade levels and/or programs in which it will make seats available to school choice program students, as well as the number of seats in each grade level and/or program. Adjustments to the number of seats available in the choice district can be made with the approval of the department. This is a flexible process and department staff works closely with each choice district to ensure that all requests for adjustments are expedited.

Show information in the following, or a similar, format:

In year one, the following seats will be made available to choice program students:

Grade____	No. of Seats: _____	Grade____	No. of Seats: _____
Grade____	No. of Seats: _____	Grade____	No. of Seats: _____*

In year two, the following seats will be made available to choice program students:

Grade____	No. of Seats: _____	Grade____	No. of Seats: _____
Grade____	No. of Seats: _____	Grade____	No. of Seats: _____*

In year three, the following seats will be made available to choice program students:

Grade____	No. of Seats: _____	Grade____	No. of Seats: _____
Grade____	No. of Seats: _____	Grade____	No. of Seats: _____*

\*add as many grade levels as necessary.

## **PART II: STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS**

1. The district must describe the method by which it will ensure that nonresident choice program students have been selected for enrollment through a random, unbiased process such as that described in the sample language below. The sample language may be incorporated into the district's application.

### ***Sample language:***

Choice program students will be admitted to *[fill in name of district]* through a random, unbiased process. If the number of applications for choice seats exceeds the number of seats available, the choice district will hold a lottery. A number will be assigned to each applicant and selection will be made by a random drawing.

If a lottery is held, a waiting list will be developed of those students not selected in the lottery.

2. Provide a student population diversity analysis of the potential impact of the program on the ethnic, racial, economic, and geographic diversity of the student population in the applicant district and in the likely participating district(s). Student population diversity must include, but is not limited to, the ethnic, racial, economic and geographic diversity of a district's student population.

An important goal of the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program is to increase heterogeneity in choice districts that might otherwise remain homogeneous. Therefore, applicant districts are asked to address their expectations of the impact of the school choice program on student population diversity both in their own districts and in the districts they identify as potential sending districts.

The Commissioner may take appropriate action, consistent with state and federal law, to provide that student population diversity is maintained in all districts participating in the school choice program. Such action may include, but is not limited to the following:

- directing a choice district to take appropriate steps to successfully implement the district's plan for maintaining student population diversity;
- restricting the number of choice program students from a specific district of residence;
- restricting the authority of a choice district to accept additional choice program students in the future; and/or
- revoking approval of a choice district. *Interdistrict Public School Choice Act* §7c(6)b; *N.J.A.C.6A:12-3.1a.6(d)*.

3. Provide a plan, such as that described in the sample language below, for maintaining student population diversity in the choice district and in the likely participating district(s).

***Sample language:***

The district will review its current Comprehensive Equity Plan with staff from the Office of Equity and School Choice in the New Jersey Department of Education and will:

1. extend the plan to include all choice program students; and
2. modify its plan to reflect the impact of the choice program students on district diversity, if necessary.

The applicant district assumes that all sending districts will take appropriate steps to review and modify their Comprehensive Equity Plans to reflect the impact of the choice program on the diversity of their districts.

4. In addition, ensure that the plan takes into consideration court-ordered or administrative court-ordered desegregation plans.
5. Describe in detail the “reasonable criteria” that will be used to select prospective students pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 6A:12-4.2(a)2*.

***Sample language:***

Resident students of the choice district seeking entrance to the \_\_\_\_\_ program are required to meet the following criteria: ***[List criteria applicable to resident students, except any residency requirement]***

The same criteria and only these criteria will be applied to applicants to become choice program students.

**Option:** Applicants to become choice program students can also be required in the application to indicate an interest in a specialized program offered by the choice district.

6. State clearly whether the district will accept students who live more than 20 miles from the choice school.
7. If the district will accept students who live more than 20 miles from the choice school, establish a specific acceptable distance that will not interfere with students’ educational experiences.

Include an assurance that the amount of time students must spend in transit will not have a negative impact on their educational opportunities and achievement.

### **PART III : PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM**

1. Outline the district’s planned public information program, including at a minimum:
  - timelines for the development and implementation of the regionwide public information program;
  - notification that the district is a choice district;
  - student application procedures;
  - descriptions of the district, its schools, its programs, and its student and course policies. Include information on policies that prohibit discrimination and that ensure that all students will have barrier-free access to school programs; and
  - method for updating information in the public information program.
2. Outline the district’s planned parent information center, including at a minimum:
  - the district’s timelines for the development and implementation of the parent information center;

- the activities planned for the center; and
- the materials that will be made available through the center.

**7. FORMS FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION  
TO BECOME A CHOICE DISTRICT**

## INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION

### Cover Page

County/District Code: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District Operating Type and District Factor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Street or Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

District Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Seats Available for Nonresident Choice program students by Grade Level:

<b>Grade 1</b>	No. of seats: ____	<b>Grade 4</b>	No. of seats: ____	<b>Grade 7</b>	No. of seats: ____
<b>Grade 2</b>	No. of seats: ____	<b>Grade 5</b>	No. of seats: ____	<b>Grade 8</b>	No. of seats: ____
<b>Grade 3</b>	No. of seats: ____	<b>Grade 6</b>	No. of seats: ____	<b>Grade 9</b>	No. of seats: ____
				<b>Grade 10</b>	No. of seats: ____

Total seats available in district: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please mark with an X all that apply to your district:**

- Currently in a formal sending/receiving relationship\_\_\_\_  
If yes, as a sending district\_\_\_\_ or a receiving district\_\_\_\_  
If yes, with which district(s) and grade level(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Level II monitoring status \_\_\_\_\_
- Under a court-ordered or voluntary desegregation plan \_\_\_\_\_
- Currently receiving nonresident students on a tuition basis pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:38-3*\_\_\_\_  
If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- Currently receiving nonresident students who are children of teaching staff members permitted by contract or local policy to be enrolled in the district without payment of tuition\_\_\_\_  
If yes, how many?\_\_\_\_\_

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I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the information contained herein is true, accurate, and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Chief School Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of CSA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Board Approval

*Due: October 29, 2010*

**INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION**  
**Classroom Space Identification Form**

**USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH SCHOOL**

**District:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School Code:** \_\_\_\_ \_

**School Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of seats available: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Size with choice program students: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Student/Teacher Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Teacher Ratio with all seats (including choice) filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of seats available: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Size with choice program students: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Student/Teacher Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Teacher Ratio with all seats (including choice) filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of seats available: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Size with choice program students: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Student/Teacher Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Teacher Ratio with all seats (including choice) filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of seats available: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Size with choice program students: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Student/Teacher Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Teacher Ratio with all seats (including choice) filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of seats available: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Size with choice program students: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Student/Teacher Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Teacher Ratio with all seats (including choice) filled: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class Size: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of seats available: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Size with choice program students: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Student/Teacher Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student/Teacher Ratio with all seats (including choice) filled: \_\_\_\_\_



*Due: October 29, 2010*

**INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION  
PROGRAM NARRATIVE**

*Use as much space as you need for each section*

*(Instructions for completing the application forms appear on pp. 16-21 of this document.)*

**PART I: DISTRICT IDENTIFICATION**

1. **Description of the district, its schools and its programs. *Attach a copy of the student handbook, course description guide and transportation policy.***
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2.
  - a. **Community demographics**
  
  
  - b. **Student population demographics**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **Description of program to be offered to choice program students.**

4. **Organizational structure of the district**
5. **The individual and/or office within the district responsible for the administration and coordination of the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program.**
6. **List of likely participating districts**
7. **Previous experience with intradistrict/interdistrict choice programs**
8. **Three-year plan**

## INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM APPLICATION PROGRAM NARRATIVE

## PART II: STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS

- 1.**      **How will the district ensure that nonresident choice program students have been selected for enrollment through a random, unbiased process?**
- 2.**      **Analysis of the potential impact of the choice program on student population diversity**

  - a.**          **in your district**
  - b.**          **in potential sending districts**
- 3.**      **Plan for maintaining student population diversity**

  - a.**          **in your district**
  - b.**          **in potential sending districts**

## INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM APPLICATION PROGRAM NARRATIVE

4. Identify all court-ordered and/or administrative court-ordered desegregation plans affecting your district and/or potential sending districts.
5. Describe in detail the “reasonable criteria” that will be used to select prospective students.
6. Will the district accept students who live more than 20 miles from the choice school?
7. If the district plans to accept students who live more than 20 miles from the choice school, how far will it extend the radius of acceptable distance and how will it ensure that travel time will not have a negative impact on the students’ educational experience?

## PART III: PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

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